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ABSTRACT

While the majority of society has continued to decrease in family size, historically the Mexican American population has continued to maintain an extraordinary fertility and a resulting large family size. This study examined fertility patterns among the Spanish speaking population through a comparative demographic analysis of the 1950-1970 censuses. The Spanish surnamed population was compared state by state throughout the Southwest with the total population. Age and sex composition, dependency and fertility rates, and family size patterns were analyzed, as well as overall rates of growth. Data were obtained primarily from the 1950, 1960, and 1970 Special Reports on Persons of Spanish Surname and the individual State Reports of the 1970 Census of Population for the five Southwestern states. Only comparable tables of these census reports were used for continuity. It was found that while the fertility rate of the total population of the Southwest did in fact increase in 1960, by 1970 the current fertility rate had decreased to levels below that in 1950 in every state throughout the Southwest. The Mexican American decreasing fertility was evidenced in the population pyramids, age composition tables, dependency ratios, child-woman ratios, children ever born per 1,000 women ever married tables, and the average persons per family data analyzed from census data. (AUTHOR/NQ)

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THE CHANGING FERTILITY PATTERN OF THE MEXICAN AMERICANS

by

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ABSTRACT

While the majority of society has continued to decrease in family size, historically the Mexican American population has continued to maintain an extraordinary fertility and a resulting large family size. The paper examines fertility patterns among the Spanish speaking population through a comparative demographic analysis of the 1950-1970 censuses. The paper compares the Spanish surnamed population state by state throughout the Southwest with that of the total population. Age and sex composition, dependency and fertility rates, and family size patterns are analyzed, as well as overall rates of growth. Recent findings indicate a first recorded drop in fertility of the Mexican American population throughout the entire Southwest.

INTRODUCTION

In the recent past a number of authors have examined minority group status and the effect of minority group status on fertility (Goldscheider and Uhlenberg, 1969; Sly, 1970). Most of the studies assume that as the assimilation and acculturation process proceed, the fertility patterns of majority and minority populations will converge (Lee, Roberts and Frankowski, 1972; Weinstein, 1976; and Thomlinson, 1965: 178). For example, Uhlenberg (1973) states that, "As more individuals perceive children as an expense and an impediment to greater economic achievement, and as efforts at contraceptive dissemination among the poor increase, we can expect more Mexican-Americans to respond by reducing the sizes of their families." Leibenstein (1974), an economist, analyzing the economic theory of fertility concluded that "...among the persistent consequences of economic development are increases in the educational level, net migration to urban areas, and structural changes in demand for labor....towards statuses whose fertility is low." This implies the relationship often quoted--the higher the educational level, the lower the number of children in the completed family.

Recent research findings have produced ambiguous conclusions. For example, Roberts and Lee (1974) report, "All things considered, the results indicate that structural variables such as place of residence, income, occupation, education, and ethnic status do not provide much explanation of fertility differentials." In contrast, Ritchey (1975) reports, "Regardless of race and level of racial inequity, fertility declines as education increases." Uhlenberg (1973), after analyzing the 1960 census tables on Children Ever Born Per 1000 Ever-Married Women, concluded:

> The ratio of children under 5 years old to women aged 20 to 44...indicates that the reproductive level achieved by Mexican immigrants in 1960 was characteristic of all white women in the United States in 1860. Thus, the average family size of first generation Mexican Americans is equal to that of other American families during the early stages of the Industrial Revolution.

Bradshaw and Bean (1973) contrasted Mexican American fertility with that of Anglo fertility from 1950 to 1970 in the Southwestern states using the census tables on Children Ever Born Per 1000 Women, and adjusted for age by ethnicity or surname and age of women. They concluded that, "Mexican American and Anglo Americans in the Southwest have followed similar trends in fertility since 1950.... Hence, these data provide little evidence to support the thesis that the fertility differential between the two populations have substantially converged." Although Bradshaw and Bean seem to be persuaded that there is little evidence to support the convergence of the two populations, several considerations need to be reviewed.

The one area of agreement in the literature is that high fertility levels of the Mexican American population have been extensively documented and often discussed (Bradshaw and Bean, 1973; Grebler, et al., 1970; Uhlenberg, 1972; Alvirez, 1973). Whether fertility has remained high and unchanging is the question this paper purports to examine.

THE PRESENT RESEARCH

The Validity of the Data

The data for this analysis comes primarily from the 1950, 1960 and 1970 Special Reports on Persons of Spanish Surname and the individual State Reports of the 1970 Census of Population for the five Southwestern states--Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico and Texas. Only comparable tables of the 1950, 1960 and 1970 census reports have been used for continuity.

It is recognized that there are many difficulties associated with using Census data, most important being the change in classification. For a complete discussion of this problem, Hernandez, et al. (1973) presents a complete analysis of the conceptual definitions, language ambiguities, undercounts, and the slippages implied by interethnic marriage. They also point out that "aside from the foreign stock designation Spanish surname provides the only historical comparable information for recent decades concerning the population of the Southwest generally assumed to be Mexican American."

For the purpose of this paper, the terms "Mexican American" and "Spanish surnamed" will be used interchangeably to represent all persons generally assumed to be Mexican Americans in the Southwest.

DATA ANALYSIS

1. Total Population

The percentage of growth from 1950 to 1960 in the United States was 18.8 per cent as contrasted to the Southwest which increased their population by 39.2 per cent. The Mexican American population increased 54 per cent during the same period. From 1960 to 1970 the population increase was 13.9, 23.3 and 76.1 per cent, respectively. Tables 1 and 2 show a more detailed accounting of the population growth of the Southwest, by state. The main question arising out of a progressive population increase is whether fertility is on the increase, or is the population increase the result of exponential growth.

2. Age Composition and Dependency

Any age-sex pyramid contains the population record of nearly a century of societal experience. Pinches or bulges can indicate many social factors;

Table 1. Spanish Surnamed Persons as Percent of Total Population for Five Southwestern States: 1970, 1960, 1950

	1970			1960			1950		
		Spanish Surnamed			Spanish Surnamed			Spanish Surnamed	
	Population	Number	% Total	Population	Number	% Total	Population	Number	% Total
Total - United States	203,211,926	9,294,509	4.0	178,466,736			150,216,110		
Total - Southwest	36,147,305	6,188,362	17.1	29,309,477	3,5[illegible]3,684	12.0	21,053,280	2,281,710	10.3
Arizona	1,770,900	333,349	18.8	1,302,161	206,904	15.9	749,587	128,580	17.2
California	19,957,715	3,101,589	15.5	15,720,860	1,456,22[illegible]	9.3	10,586,223	758,400	7.2
Colorado	2,207,259	286,467	13.0	1,753,925	152,039	8.7	1,325,089	118,715	9.0
New Mexico	1,016,000	407,286	40.1	951,023	275,731	29.0	681,187	248,560	36.5
Texas	11,195,431	2,059,671	18.4	9,581,508	1,422,787	14.8	7,711,194	1,027,455	13.3

Source: Compiled from Table 1, 1970 Census of Population Special Report, Persons of Spanish Surname, PC(2)-1D; 1970 State Reports 4, 6, 7, 33, and 45, Social and Economic Characteristics, Table 48; 1950 and 1960 from Table 6-1, Grebler, p. 106.

Table 2. Percent of Population Growth for Five Southwestern States, 1930-1970

	U.S. Total Pop.	Southwest Total	Southwest S.S.	Arizona Total	Arizona S.S.	California Total	California S.S.	Colorado Total	Colorado S.S.	New Mexico Total	New Mexico S.S.	Texas Total	Texas S.S.
1930-1940			22.4		-10.8		13.1		60.4		273.7		8.0
1940-195[illegible]			45.3		26.2		82.2		28.3		12.1		39.1
1950-1960	18.8	39.2	54.0	73.7	60.9	48.5	92.0	32.4	28.1	39.6	10.9	24.2	38.5
1960-1970	13.9	23.3	76.1	36.0	61.1	27.0	113.0	25.8	88.4	6.8	47.7	16.8	44.8

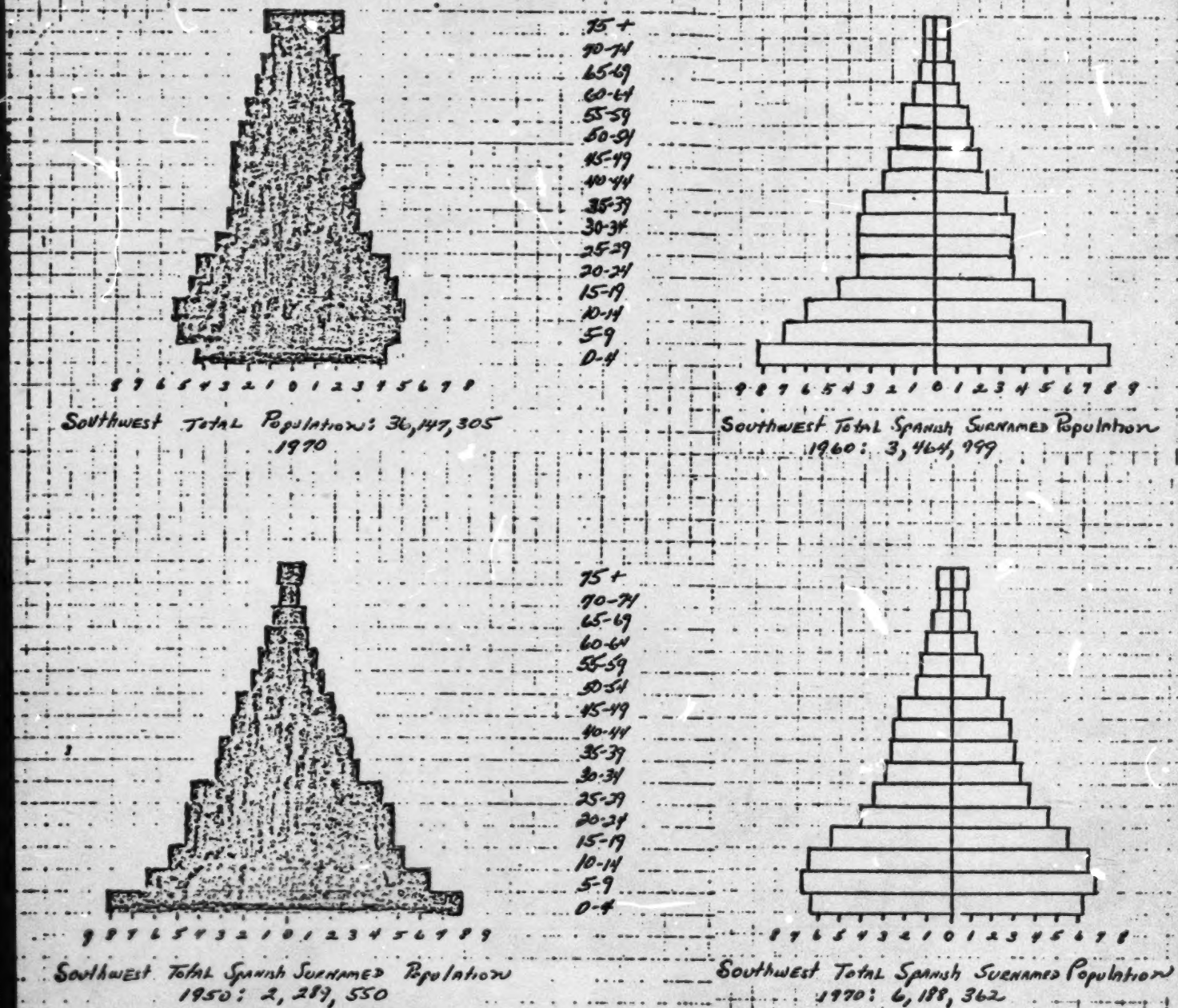
Source: Compiled by author.

high or low birth rates, deaths or migrations, as well as primary and secondary influences or epidemics or wars. The pyramid of the Spanish surnamed of the Southwest cannot be explained as readily as the pyramid of the total population since adequate data or births and deaths have not been separately registered, in part due to laws prohibiting the classification of such data. This has also eliminated the availability of life tables from insurance companies.

It is often the case that the Mexican American people are contrasted with those of the Republic of Mexico due to the national origin and the similar shape of the population pyramid, one that has a broad base and sharply slants from the 0-4 age group to the top. This type of pyramid is typical of countries that are growing rapidly, have high birth and death rates, have not yet reduced fertility, and have a low median age and a high dependency rate (Thompson and Lewis, 1965: 110-111). This well fits the description of the age-structure of the Spanish surnamed of the Southwest (see Figure 1, Population Pyramids) until the 1970 census. For the first time the 0-4 base was the same or shorter than the 5-9 and the 10-14 bars in the pyramids in all states of the Southwest, indicative of a decrease in fertility.

In 1960, all states reflected an increase in the proportion of their populations in the 5-9 age range. Colorado was the only state to decrease their proportion of the 0-4 age range. From this it can be conjectured that Colorado Spanish surnamed women may have started to reduce their fertility sometime during the latter 1950's. The 1970 Census indicates that the largest proportional decrease was in Colorado where since 1950 the Colorado Spanish surnamed have reduced their 0-9 age proportion from 31.5 per cent to 26.2 per cent, a decrease of 4.9 per cent as compared to that of New Mexico of 4.1 per cent, and to the Southwest of 2.7 per cent. Table 3 shows the age composition of the Spanish surnamed by state from 1950 to 1970.

Figure 1. Population Pyramids: 1950, 1960, 1970



Source: Compiled from State Reports 4, 6, 7, 33 and 45 of the 1950-1970 General Social Economic Characteristics.

Table 3. Age Composition of the Spanish Surnamed of the Southwest by State 1950-1970. (By Percentage)

Area	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70+	Median Age
Southwest																
1950	15.9	12.7	10.6	9.6	9.5	8.5	6.3	6.0	5.0	4.5	3.3	2.6	2.0	1.6	1.8	20.6
1960	16.0	14.0	11.8	8.8	7.2	7.1	7.2	6.5	4.7	4.1	3.5	3.0	2.0	1.6	2.4	19.6
1970	12.4	13.5	12.7	10.8	8.5	7.1	6.2	5.8	5.5	4.6	3.3	2.8	2.3	1.8	2.6	19.8
Arizona																
1950	15.8	13.4	11.5	9.8	9.1	7.8	6.4	5.9	4.8	4.1	3.1	2.6	2.0	1.7	2.0	19.8
1960	16.3	13.9	11.9	9.2	8.1	7.1	6.9	6.3	4.9	4.0	3.2	2.8	1.7	1.4	2.1	19.3
1970	12.8	13.8	13.5	11.0	8.5	6.9	5.7	5.5	4.9	4.3	3.5	2.8	2.2	1.8	2.4	19.4
California																
1950	14.3	11.3	9.6	9.2	10.4	9.4	7.1	6.3	5.4	5.0	3.6	2.8	2.1	1.6	1.7	22.7
1960	15.2	12.9	10.5	8.2	7.6	7.8	8.0	7.2	5.2	4.2	3.6	3.2	2.2	1.7	2.3	22.1
1970	12.1	13.1	12.1	10.3	8.6	7.6	6.7	6.2	5.9	4.8	3.4	2.8	2.2	1.8	2.4	21.4
Colorado																
1950	17.1	14.0	12.4	10.1	8.4	7.4	5.8	5.3	4.5	3.8	2.9	2.7	2.2	1.7	1.8	18.2
1960	15.9	14.9	13.1	9.6	7.0	6.5	6.4	5.5	4.2	3.9	3.3	2.7	2.1	1.9	2.7	18.1
1970	12.2	14.0	13.4	11.5	8.8	7.2	5.9	5.5	5.2	4.0	2.9	2.7	2.0	1.8	2.9	19.5
New Mexico																
1950	16.2	13.5	12.0	10.0	8.4	7.3	5.7	5.6	4.6	4.1	3.3	2.9	2.3	1.8	2.4	19.2
1960	16.3	14.4	13.0	9.5	6.9	6.3	6.1	5.7	4.4	4.2	3.4	3.0	2.0	1.9	2.9	18.3
1970	11.6	14.0	13.4	11.4	8.0	6.2	5.8	5.5	5.0	4.5	3.6	2.9	2.6	2.1	3.3	19.8
Texas																
1950	16.9	13.4	10.7	9.7	9.3	8.3	5.9	6.0	4.9	4.3	3.0	2.4	1.9	1.6	1.8	19.6
1960	16.7	14.8	12.9	9.2	6.8	6.6	6.6	6.0	4.2	4.9	3.4	2.9	1.9	1.5	2.3	18.0
1970	12.9	14.0	13.3	11.4	8.4	6.6	5.6	5.3	5.1	4.4	3.2	2.8	2.3	1.9	2.7	19.3

Source: 1950 Special Report PE No. 3C, Table 2 and 3; 1960 Special Report PC(2)-1B, Table 2; 1970 U.S. Population Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics, State Volumes 4, 6, 7, 33 and 45, Table 48. Compiled by Author.

The disproportionate number of dependents among Spanish surnamed are primarily children and adolescents. In 1960 there were 112 persons under age 20 for every 100 Mexican Americans 20 to 64 years old, and in 1970 there were 107 persons to every 100, a reduction of 4.5 per cent.

Dependency ratios of the Spanish surnamed are unusually higher than that of the total population of the Southwest, 89.2 as compared to 116.9 for 1970. The dependency ratio purports to measure how many dependents each 100 persons in the productive years must support. The age group 20-64 is taken to be the "productive" segment and youth under 20 and older persons aged 65 or over are the "dependent" segment. The ratio of the population under 20 and over 65 is then multiplied by 100.

The Mexican Americans having the lowest dependency ratio in 1970 lived in California (107.4 compared to 85.0 for the total state), and those with highest dependency ratio lived in Texas (128.2 compared with 94.1 for the state). Colorado was the only state in the Southwest where the Spanish surnamed dependency ratio consistently dropped over the twenty year period (133.0 to 125.9), a decrease of 5.3 per cent, or 5.3 persons for every 100 persons of Spanish surname aged 20 to 64. Table 4 lists the dependency ratio by state from 1950 to 1970 for both the total and the Spanish surnamed populations.

In summary, while there was a 54 per cent increase in population reflected by the 1960 Census over the 1950 Census, there was a 52 per cent increase in the 0-4 age range, and a 66.2 per cent increase in the 5-9 range. By 1970, there was an increase in the Spanish surnamed population of 76.1 per cent over the 1960 Census with only a 38.4 per cent increase in the 0-4 group and 72.7 per cent increase in the 5-9 group, indicating a decreasing fertility trend during the 1960's, possibly since 1965. A decrease in the Spanish surname dependency ratio from 1960 to 1970 was also noted, a decrease of 3.4 per cent.

TABLE 4. Dependency Ratios of the Southwest Population: 1950-1970

Dependency Ratio	1950 Spanish Surname	1960 Spanish Surname	1970		Spanish Surname % change 1960-1970
			Total Southwest	Spanish Surname	
Southwest	109.8	120.8	89.2	116.9	- 3.4
Arizona	118.4	122.2	97.4	126.4	+ 3.4
California	91.5	103.6	85.0	107.4	+ 3.7
Colorado	133.0	139.3	91.4	125.9	- 9.6
New Mexico	126.2	137.9	103.4	126.6	- 8.2
Texas	117.9	135.4	94.1	128.2	- 5.3

SOURCE: Compiled from 1950 and 1960 Special Reports of the Spanish Surnamed, and the State Reports 4, 6, 7, 33 and 45 of the 1970 General Social and Economic Characteristics.

4. Fertility Patterns

In the literature, most authors have preferred to use the Children Ever Born table for analysis; however, these data are not broken down into state by state comparison where more discrete inferences can be detected. The prevailing values of a society determine the decision to have or not have children at a particular point in time, due partly to modern contraceptive devices. Because the child-woman ratio, for any given census year, indicates the more recent trends in fertility, it serves a useful purpose in detecting early trends. The child-woman ratio is used to measure the incidence of childbearing in the population of adult women. Specifically, it is the number of children under five years of age per 1,000 women of "childbearing" age. The childbearing age selected for this analysis is 15 through 49. The child-woman ratio has been used where vital registration data are lacking, a situation which is applicable to the Mexican American population of the Southwest. [Bogue and Palmore (1964) reported a correlation of .930 with the crude birth rate, .961 with the general fertility rate, and .964 with the total fertility rate.]

Child-Woman Ratio

In 1950, the child-woman ratio for the total Southwest population was 430 while the Spanish surnamed ratio was 655, 52.3 per cent higher. Table 5 presents the child-woman ratios for 1950 through 1970, by state. The lowest ratio in the general population was found in California (401) and the highest was found among the Spanish surnamed population in Colorado (762). By 1960, the situation had reversed. California's child-woman ratio increased 17.7 per cent, the largest increase among the general population; and the Colorado Spanish surnamed population decreased 3.1 per cent. Not only had the California

Table 5: Measures of Fertility: Spanish Surnamed Child-Woman Ratio Compared with the Population of the Southwest; 1950, 1960 and 1970

Child-Woman Fertility Rates	Total 1950	Spanish Surname 1950	Total 1960	Spanish Surname 1960	% Change 1950-1960 Tot.	% Change 1950-1960 SS	Total 1970	Spanish Surname 1970	% Change 1960-1970 Tot.	% Change 1960-1970 SS	% Change 1950-1970 Tot.	% Change 1950-1970 SS	1970 % Diff. Tot.Pop
United States													
Southwest	430	655	499	709	16.0	8.2	348	499	-30.3	-29.6	-19.1	-23.8	43.4
Arizona	488	660	554	753	13.5	14.1	376	528	-32.1	-29.8	-23.0	-20.0	40.4
California	401	574	472	657	17.7	14.5	334	478	-29.2	-27.2	-16.7	-16.8	43.1
Colorado	448	762	516	738	15.2	-3.1	340	501	-34.1	-32.1	-24.1	-34.2	47.4
New Mexico	561	713	618	754	10.2	5.8	392	483	-36.6	-35.9	-30.1	-32.2	23.2
Texas	449	691	520	745	15.8	7.8	368	529	-29.2	-29.0	-18.0	-23.4	43.8

Source: Compiled by author from:
Table 6-12, Grebler, p. 132. Spanish Surname: 1960: 1960 Census of Population, PC(2)-1B, Table 2; 1950: 1950 U.S. Census of Population, PE No 3C, Table 5. Total: 1960 U.S. Census of Population, 1960 State volumes, Table 17; 1950 U.S. Census of Population, 1950 State Volumes, Table 17; 1970, compiled from State Reports 4, 6, 7, 33 and 45, Social and Economic Characteristics, Table 48.

general population markedly increased their fertility, but so had every state in the Southwest for the cumulative increase of 16 per cent. The Mexican American fertility also increased, but by only approximately one-half that of the general population, 8.2 per cent. Any appearance of convergence in fertility must be viewed as an increase in the population of the Southwest as a whole, and not as a decrease in Mexican American fertility in the fifties.

However, in Colorado the Mexican American population did decrease their fertility by 3.1 per cent. This was the first indication of a drop in fertility that was to be evidenced throughout the entire Southwest population in the 1970 Census. From the population age distribution in 1960, the drop in fertility in Colorado occurred in the 0-4 age range, which indicates that the Mexican American women may have started to reduce their fertility sometime during the latter 1950's. The 1970 Census revealed a decrease in fertility in every state in the Southwest, for a total decrease of 30.3 per cent in the total population and a 29.6 decrease in the Mexican American fertility.

For the first time in recorded history (the 1950 census being the earliest recorded data), Mexican American fertility had dropped below the 500 ratio. The lowest fertility ratio was found in California, that of 478, a decrease of 27.2 per cent. The highest decrease, that of 34.1 per cent, was found in Colorado. The across-the-Southwest decrease in Mexican American fertility gives at least partial credence to reports that family planning had become rather widely accepted by Mexican Americans, at least in the urban centers (Grebler, et al., 1970: 135, in reporting results of surveys conducted during 1965-66 in Los Angeles and San Antonio).

The more indicative fertility trend comes from the comparison of the 1950 to the 1970 ratios. The total fertility ratio was 430 in 1950 and 348 for 1970, a decrease of 19.1 per cent. As for the Mexican American fertility, the

ratio was 655 in 1950 and 499 (the same ratio as the total population in 1960) in 1970, a decrease of 23.8 per cent. Even though the Mexican American fertility decreased by 4.7 per cent--more than the total Southwest population--there remains a 43.4 per cent fertility differential from 1960. That differential was 52.3 per cent in 1950, indicating a "convergence" of 9.2 per cent over a twenty year period.

Children Ever Born Per 1000 Women Ever Married

Figure 2 graphically depicts the age-specific fertility reported by the 1950, 1960 and 1970 Census data. It will be noted from Figure 2C that the 1950 through 1970 Mexican American age specific fertility from ages 19 through 29 generally followed the same pattern; however, 1950 was slightly lower than the 1960 fertility rate and slightly higher than the 1970 fertility. It was from age 39 that differentials appear, commonly called the "scissor effect." During 1950 fertility continued to increase to a high of 4,939 (an average of 4.939 children at completed fertility). During 1960 the completed fertility remained fairly constant from age 39 through 49 (a range of 4,029 to 4,246), but by age 50 and over the completed fertility was 4,749, a reduction of 3.8 per cent. The peak of the 1970 fertility was reached at age 44 with an index of 4,395, declined to 4,358 for age 45-49, and then increased slightly to 4,397 at age 50 and over.

In summary, the average completed fertility of the Mexican American female of the Southwest was, statistically, 4.939 children at the 1950 census, 4.749 children at the 1960 census, and 4.397 children at the 1970 census, decrease in the average family size by .542 children. Thus, the average Mexican American completed family size decreased by 11 per cent over a twenty year period.

Figure 2. Measures of Fertility: Spanish Surnamed Women Compared with the United States Total Population: 1950, 1960 and 1970.

Figure 2A.

Children Ever Born Per 1000 Women Ever Married

Figure 2B.

Percent of Childless Women Ever Married

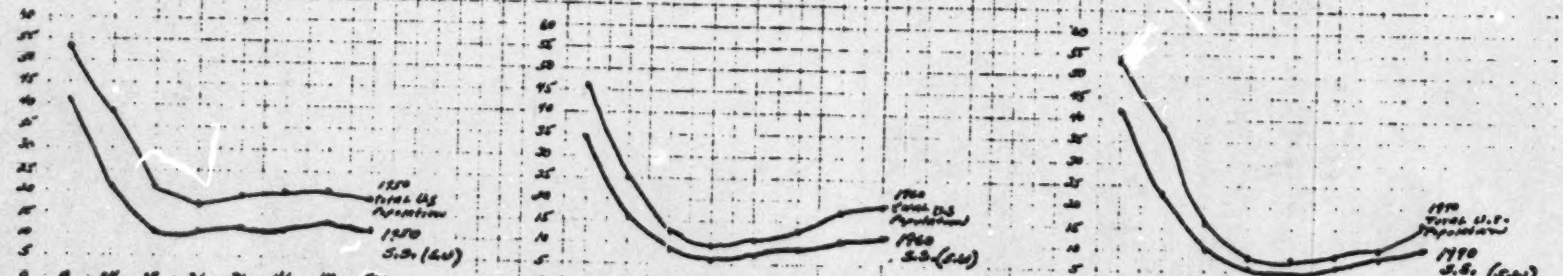
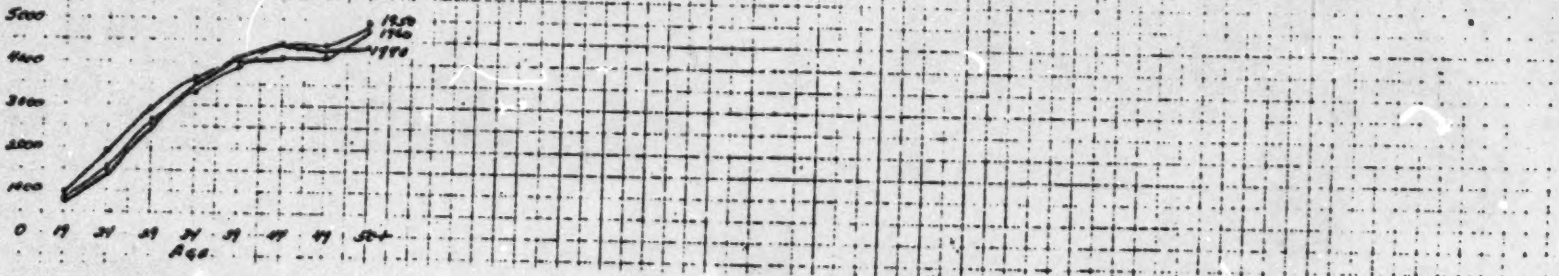


Figure 2C.

Spanish Surnamed of the Southwest: Children Ever Born Per 1000 Women Ever Married



Source: 1950 Special Report P-E No. 4C, Fertility, U.S. Census of Population, Tables 1, 2 and 14.
1960 Special Report PC(2)-3A, Women By Number of Children Ever Born, U.S. Census of Population, Tables 1, 2, 11.
1970 Special Report PC(2)-3A, Women By Number of Children Ever Born, U.S. Census of Population, Tables 1, 2 and 13.

Family Size

The average number of persons in a family for the total Southwest population has remained relatively stable, from 3.98 in 1960 to 4.0 in 1970. There were 698,027 Spanish surnamed families in the Southwest in 1960, with an average of 5.03 persons per family, and in 1970 there were 1,333,372 families with an average of 4.64 persons per family, an indication of a possible drop in family size in the future.

In a survey taken by the Bureau of the Census in June 1973, of the 893,000 Spanish surnamed persons surveyed in the four major regions of the United States (not to be totally accepted as the view of the Spanish surnamed of the Southwest), over 40 per cent of the Spanish surnamed women aged 18-24 expected to have two children during their lifetime, and less than twenty per cent expected to have four or more children. Responses from the Spanish surnamed showed that the older the age, the larger the expected family size; and its inverse, the younger the age, the smaller the family size expected. The 1970 Census lists 5.8 per cent of the Spanish surnamed female population in the 35-39, 6.3 per cent in the 30-34, 7.2 per cent in the 25-29, and 19.8 per cent in the 18-24 age-specific categories. Over time, the 20-24 age category has been found to be the most fecund group. If the June 1973 survey can be accepted as an indication of birth expectations, the 18-24 age group (the group having the largest proportion in the survey) could have quite an impact on reducing the family size of the Spanish surnamed of the Southwest.

CONCLUSION

The assumption guiding much of the research on minority group fertility has been that as the process of assimilation and acculturation occurs, fertility

behavior and attitudes of the majority and minority will converge. Some researchers have rejected and some have accepted the hypothesis when testing the various structural and/or behavioral variables.

In 1973 Bradshaw and Bean examined the trends in Mexican American fertility from 1950 to 1970 in the Southwestern states, and found that the convergence in fertility that did occur "may be attributed to more rapid increases in Anglo fertility rather than to decreases in Mexican American fertility." The data analysis presented in this paper presents a different conclusion. While the total population of the Southwest did in fact increase fertility in 1960, by 1970 the current fertility rate had decreased to levels below that in 1950 in every state throughout the Southwest. Likewise, in 1970 Mexican American fertility rates show decreases in every state of the Southwest below their 1950 levels. The indication of the Mexican American decreasing fertility is evidenced in the population pyramids, age composition tables, dependency ratios, child-woman ratios, children ever born per 1000 women ever married tables, and the average persons per family data analyzed from census data.

It is the conclusion of this paper that some convergence has occurred for both the total population and the Mexican American population, provided, of course, that we are able to place confidence in the census data with all its limitations.

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